

REMARKS

This application contains claims 1-82. Original claims 1-40 have been canceled without prejudice and replaced by new claims 41-82. No new matter has been introduced. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicant thanks Examiner's Arshad and Kincaid for the courtesy of an interview with Applicant's representative, Sanford T. Colb (Reg. No. 26856), held in the USPTO on October 19, 2004. At the interview, Mr. Colb presented a demonstration of "Dynamic Skin" software that is based on the principles of the present invention. A proposed amendment was discussed, emphasizing the separation provided by the present invention between the user interface objects that are used in creating a graphic user interface (GUI) and the methods of a computer application that may be invoked by the GUI. It was explained that this aspect of the present invention permits the user interface objects to be mapped to any arbitrarily-chosen positions on the user interface screen, independently of the computer application.

Claims 1-6, 8, 11-19, 23, 24 and 27-40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) over Baker (U.S. Patent 6,002,401). Applicant has written new independent claims 41, 68 and 76 in order to clarify the distinction of the present invention over Baker, as discussed in the interview. The remaining, dependent claims have been rewritten for proper antecedent dependence from the new independent claims.

New claim 41 recites a method for creating a GUI for a computer application, using user interface objects in a GUI layer that is separate from the computer application. Each user interface object performs a particular, generic user interface function, such as a push button, slider or text area, and is associated with a corresponding graphic element, i.e., a picture of the push button, slider, etc. The locations of the user interface objects in a user interface screen are defined by a mapping. The separation of the user interface objects from the application permits this mapping to be arbitrarily defined. In other words, as stated in the specification (page 3, lines 15-17), the claimed invention provides a "dynamic skin, which can be used by a designer of a GUI to lay out user interface elements... substantially without constraint as to their positions, shapes or sizes." The language of claim 41 is further supported in the specification on page 3, lines 8-20; page 4, lines 1-17; and page 10, lines 16-18.

Thus, in the method of claim 41, the locations and definitions of the user interface objects in the GUI are determined by the GUI designer independently of the functions and program code of the computer application. The GUI is thus separated from the software code of application, so that the designer is afforded complete flexibility in creating and changing the GUI and in transporting the GUI from one application to another. The GUI layer and the application layer are completely separate, and each may be changed independently of the other as long as the interface object names are preserved.

Baker describes a graphical user interface for an operating system, in which pictorial graphics are associated with specific directories. Baker is concerned with operating systems (col. 1, lines 12-15), rather than applications, and makes no mention whatsoever of object-oriented programming, as required by amended claim 1. Furthermore, as shown by Baker in Fig. 1a, each picture in the user interface is uniquely associated with a particular directory to which it has a metaphorical connection (col. 12, lines 44-65). Thus, rather than separating the GUI layer from the underlying functional layer as provided by the present invention, Baker intimately intertwines these layers. The designer of a GUI, using Baker's method, is constrained to a particular mapping, as dictated by the underlying directory structure and the picture that is used to represent it. There is no possibility that the designer may arbitrarily define a mapping, as provided by claim 41.

Thus, claim 41 is believed to be patentable over Baker. In view of the patentability of claim 41, claims 42-67, which depend from claim 41, are also believed to be patentable.

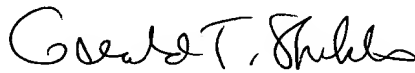
Claims 68 and 76, respectively, recite a computer software product and apparatus, which operate on principles similar to the method of claim 41. These claims are therefore believed to be patentable for the reasons stated above in reference to claim 41. In view of the patentability of claims 68 and 76, claims 69-75 and 77-82, which depend from claim 68 or claim 76, are believed to be patentable, as well.

Claims 7, 9, 10, 20-22, 25 and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Baker in view of Ishida (U.S. Patent 5,684,969), Mukherjee (U.S. Patent 6,314,415), Holler (U.S. Patent 4,721,951), King et al. (U.S. Patent 5,491,782) or Crow et al. (U.S. Patent 6,262,724). None of these added references teaches or suggests the separation of user interface and application layers and the arbitrary definition of user interface mapping recited by the new claims in the present patent application. Therefore, claims 41-82 are believed to be

patentable over these references, as well as over any combination of these references with Baker.

Applicant believes the amendments and remarks stated above to be fully responsive to all of the grounds of rejection raised by the Examiner. In view of these amendments and remarks, all of the claims now pending in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Prompt notice to this effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: November 23, 2004

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